



Freedom of Speech Policy and Code of Practice

Version	1
Owner	Board of Directors
Approving body	Board of Directors
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See Appendix A for version history

Freedom of Speech Policy and Code of Practice

1. Purpose

- 1.1. Boomsatsuma Education Ltd ('Boomsatsuma') is committed to fostering an environment in which ideas and perspectives can be freely expressed, discussed and challenged. In doing so, Boomsatsuma seeks to promote freedom of speech for staff, students, visitors and external speakers, so far as is reasonably practicable within the law.
- 1.2. In relation to Higher Education provision, this Policy should be read alongside Boomsatsuma's Academic Freedom Statement (HE) [\[Link\]](#) and External Speaker Procedure (HE) [\[Link\]](#). In this context, Boomsatsuma recognises and will comply with the requirements of the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act 2023 [\[Link\]](#) and other relevant legal and regulatory obligations.

2. Scope

- 2.1. This Policy applies to:
 - Employees of Boomsatsuma
 - Students and learners enrolled on Boomsatsuma programmes
 - Members of the Board of Directors and organisational committees
 - Contractors, consultants, volunteers and other individuals engaged in activities delivered or hosted by Boomsatsuma
 - Individuals participating in Boomsatsuma activities, events and programmes.
- 2.2. This Policy applies to activities undertaken by or on behalf of Boomsatsuma, including:
 - Teaching, learning and educational activities
 - Research, scholarly, creative and professional activities
 - Organisational governance and administrative activities

- Public, community and engagement activities
- Events, discussions and other forums organised, hosted or facilitated by Boomsatsuma.

2.3. This Policy applies irrespective of whether activities take place in person, online or through other forms of communication.

3. Definition of Free Speech

3.1. For the purposes of this Policy, 'freedom of speech' aligns with Article 10 of the Human Rights Act 1998 [\[Link\]](#) and is defined as: "The freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authority and regardless of frontiers". This includes the communication of ideas, opinions and information through speech, writing, images and artistic expression.

4. Principles

- 4.1. Boomsatsuma will promote a culture of open and robust debate by supporting opportunities for the exchange and challenge of ideas across its educational, creative and public activities.
- 4.2. Freedom of speech must be exercised within the law. Expressions that threaten violence, incite hatred, promote unlawful acts, or constitute harassment or discrimination are not permitted.
- 4.3. Boomsatsuma encourages discourse to be conducted with civility and respect. Participants should engage with differing perspectives and identities in a manner that supports constructive dialogue and mutual respect. See Boomsatsuma's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy [\[Link\]](#) for further information.
- 4.4. Boomsatsuma will take reasonably practicable steps to secure freedom of speech across its activities and decision-making processes, including

educational provision, employment practices, governance arrangements, complaints processes and the organisation of events.

- 4.5. In relation to Higher Education activities, Boomsatsuma may apply the Office for Students (OfS) three-step 'Framework for assessment' [\[Link\]](#) as a structured approach to decision-making, helping to ensure that any restrictions on speech are lawful, necessary and proportionate.

5. Code of Practice

- 5.1. This Code of Practice provides practical guidance on the application of the principles set out in this Policy. It applies across Boomsatsuma's activities and should be read alongside relevant organisational policies and procedures.

5.2. Lawful Expression.

Boomsatsuma supports the lawful expression of ideas, opinions and beliefs, including those that may be controversial, unpopular or challenging. The expression of views that others may find offensive, provocative or disagreeable will not, of itself, constitute grounds for restriction.

Freedom of speech must be exercised within the law and with due regard for the rights and freedoms of others.

5.3. Educational, Creative and Professional Activities.

Teaching, learning, research, scholarship, creative practice, professional activities and public engagement should support the exchange, exploration and critical examination of ideas. Participants should be able to question, test and challenge viewpoints through lawful and respectful discussion.

5.4. Events and Discussions.

Boomsatsuma seeks to facilitate events, discussions and other activities that support the lawful exchange of ideas and perspectives. Participants should be able to express, challenge and debate views in a manner consistent with the principles set out in this Policy and with relevant legal, safeguarding, health and safety and welfare requirements.

The expression of views that are controversial, unpopular or offensive, but lawful, will not in itself constitute grounds to refuse, cancel or restrict an event or activity. Freedom of speech includes the expression of views that may be challenged, criticised or opposed by others.

5.5. Decision-Making.

Where decisions are taken that may affect the exercise of freedom of speech, Boomsatsuma will seek to ensure that those decisions are lawful, evidence-based and proportionate. Consideration will be given to relevant legal duties, safeguarding responsibilities, health and safety requirements, and the rights and freedoms of others.

In relation to Higher Education activities, Boomsatsuma may have regard to relevant OfS guidance and frameworks when assessing whether restrictions on speech are justified.

5.6. External Speakers and Events (Higher Education).

Additional requirements apply to certain Higher Education activities involving external speakers. Organisers of Higher Education events involving external speakers must follow Boomsatsuma's External Speakers Procedure (HE).

Boomsatsuma will generally seek to enable Higher Education events involving external speakers to proceed. Where concerns arise relating to legality, health and safety, safeguarding, harassment, discrimination or other significant risks, reasonable and proportionate mitigations will be considered before cancellation or refusal.

Higher Education events that fall within the scope of the External Speakers Procedure should not be advertised or take place until the required approval process has been completed.

5.7. Protest and Counter-Speech.

The right of staff, students, learners and attendees to engage in lawful protest is recognised and protected. Individuals are equally entitled to express disagreement, criticism or opposition to the views of others.

Protest and counter-speech should not obstruct, intimidate or prevent others from exercising their lawful freedom of speech.

6. Breaches of this Policy

- 6.1. Failure to comply with this Policy may result in action being taken under relevant staff, student or other organisational procedures, as appropriate.
- 6.2. In the event that breaches of the law occur, Boomsatsuma shall, where required, assist prosecution authorities in implementing the process of the law. In such cases, Boomsatsuma may defer internal processes pending the outcome of criminal proceedings.

7. Legal Frameworks

- 7.1. This Policy operates within the following legal and regulatory frameworks:

General:

- The Human Rights Act 1998 [\[Link\]](#)
- Article 10 of the ECHR [\[Link\]](#)
- The Equality Act 2010 [\[Link\]](#)
- Education (No. 2) Act 1986, Section 43 [\[Link\]](#)

- Counterterrorism and Security Act 2015 [\[Link\]](#)

Higher Education:

- Higher Education and Research Act 2017 (HERA) [\[Link\]](#)
- Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act 2023 [\[Link\]](#)

7.2. Where there is any conflict between this Policy and applicable statutory or regulatory requirements, those requirements take precedence.

8. Review

8.1. This Policy will be reviewed periodically by the Board of Directors to ensure it remains aligned with relevant legislation, regulatory expectations, and provider practice.

Appendix A – Version History

Version	Date	Changes
1	10 June 2026	New draft